



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES HOLDS FIRST INMATE HEALTH SUMMIT

Experts Discuss Healthcare to Offenders After Prison

October 24, 2006 (Towson, MD) – The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) will co-sponsor the first Maryland Re-entry Health Summit to examine healthcare services for inmates in prison and in the community. The Summit will take place on Tuesday, October 24, 2006, 9:00am-4:00pm at The Empowerment Temple located at 4217 Primrose Avenue in Baltimore City. During the daylong Summit, DPSCS Treatment Services officials, community-based healthcare providers, human services experts and former-offenders will share resources and strategies to improve healthcare services for inmates when they return to the community.

During the past year more than 15,000 inmates were released from Maryland prisons and nearly 10,000 returned to Baltimore City. "Men and women returning from prison often have higher rates of infectious and chronic illnesses than the general population. However, almost all lack health insurance or any means to pay for the medical care that they need," said Richard B. Rosenblatt, DPSCS Assistant Secretary for Treatment Services. "The barriers which prevent access to healthcare pose a significant public health challenge that effect the individual inmate, his family and the community at large," he continued.

During the Summit participants will attend six concurrent breakout sessions: 1) Access to Healthcare, 2) Behavioral/Mental Health, 3) Cultural Issues, 4) Housing, 5) Infectious Disease and 6) Substance Abuse. Each session will feature expert panelists and a moderator to discuss ways to improve continuity of care, identify transitional resources, share best practices for culturally responsive programming, explore risk reduction methods and examine evidence-based practices for substance abuse treatment. Conference organizers hope that the Summit will lead to improved access to community-based healthcare and hospital/emergency department care for Maryland's ex-offenders. "The Conference is a rare opportunity for organizations that serve similar populations to discuss how they can most effectively achieve common goals," said Felix Mata, Project Director, Baltimore City Ex-Offender Initiative.

Conference co-sponsors include:

- Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)
- Governor's Advisory Council on Offender Employment Coordination
- Re-entry Center (ReC)
- Baltimore City Health Department

For additional information regarding the Maryland Prisoner Re-entry Health Summit, please call: 410-523-1060 or Karen V. Poe, DPSCS at 410-339-5011 Office or 443-829-7107 Cell Phone.

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